27. Appointment of a committee for the Pattanamtitta taluk, similar to those sanctioned for Pattanapuram, Devicolam, etc., for selecting and bringing under registry lands fit for wet cultivation now included within reserved forests.

Mr. Koshi Mathai (Member, Pattanamtitta Taluk) said that, in the reserved forests included in the Rani and Kumbazha *pakuthies* of the Pattanamtitta taluk, there were many acres of land overgrown with reeds and bushes which were of no value to the Forest Department and which might advantageously be thrown open for the cultivation of paddy. Those areas, in his opinion, were useless for teak plantation as they were situated far away from rivers, so essential for the easy transport of timber, and if such lands could be assigned for the cultivation of paddy, it would go to lessen the shortage of foodstuffs in the country. The Member also stated that he understood that the Government had already decided to appoint a committee for the Pattanamtitta taluk for inspecting the reserved forests there with a view to select swampy areas fit for paddy cultivation, and suggested that the lands available for paddy cultivation be divided into a number of convenient blocks, and that such blocks be assigned for paddy cultivation in rotation year after year. He said that, if the above suggestion could be approved, fresh lands would always be available for the successful cultivation of paddy.

Dewan's reply.—A committee of the kind proposed by you will be soon appointed for the Pattanamtitta taluk. I shall place your representation also before that committee.

(3) Excise, Trade and Customs.

28. Unsuitability of the standard marakkal as fixed in the Weights and Measures Regulation and the need for the introduction of uniformity in the weights and measures of the State as required by law.

Mr. Narasingamurtia Pillai Agastyalingam Pillai (Member, Tovala Taluk) spoke about the unsuitability of the standard *marakkal* as fixed in the rules issued under the Weights and Measures Regulation and the need for the introduction of uniformity in the weights and measures used in the State. He observed that, although the subject of standardising the *marakkal* was pressed at several sessions of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly, the grievances of the ryots in the matter remained unredressed. He added that, according to the rules issued under the Weights and Measures Regulation, VI of 1085, the standard of grain measure in Nanjanad was fixed as a *marakkal* equivalent to 4·4583 *edangalies*. The capacity of the standard *marakkal* thus fixed was not the result of any proper calculation as in the case of the standard *para*, and consequently the ryots had to pay more tax on their paddy lands than they were actually liable to pay. The standard *marakkal* was neither used by the merchants of Nanjanad nor by other inhabitants. Each used a measure of his own, thereby frustrating the aim of the Weights and Measures Regulation which was passed with the object of securing uniformity in the weights and measures used throughout the State. The Member pointed out how, with such a variety of measures, the merchants could easily defraud the people. There was also another difficulty. Whenever a party to a civil suit obtained a decree entitling him to receive paddy, he had to obtain another decree in order to ascertain the particular unit of measure according to which that paddy should be measured out. The Member then stated that the fixation of the cubic contents of the standard *kotta* as equivalent to 9·3625 *paras* of 800 cubic inches was not made after proper investigation. When, in 994 M. E., the tax payers were first allowed to pay in money one-half of their tax in kind, the Nanjanad *kotta* was taken to be equivalent to 9·3625 times the *venkala para*, having a cubic capacity of 640 cubic inches, and the commutation into money was calculated at the rate of 6 *chakrams* per *para* of paddy. Subsequently, at the commencement of the settlement in 1061 M. E., a uniformity in land and grain measures was aimed at and one *para* of seed-sowing land was taken to be equivalent to 14 cents in extent and one *kotta* equal to 7½ *paras* of seed-sowing land. The standard grain measure, *viz.*, the *para*, was also fixed at a capacity of 800 cubic inches. Still later in 1082, when, the remaining one-half of the tax was also commuted into money at the rate of eleven *chackrams* per *para* of 800 cubic inches of paddy, the settlement rates of

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tax in Nanjanad were converted into money at the above rate, it being declared at the same time that a *kotta* was equivalent to 9·3625 *paras*. The people at once pointed out that eleven *chackrams* was the price of one *para* of 800 cubic inches of paddy, that the *kotta* was equivalent to 9·3625 *paras* of 640 cubic inches, and that the commutation rate had to be fixed at the above rate. As a result of their contention, the Government subsequently declared a *kotta* as equivalent to 8·65 *paras* of 800 cubic inches.

In the year 1085, when the Weights and Measures Regulation was passed, Government ignored the above decision and again fixed the *kotta* at 9·3625 *paras*. The same decision was adhered to when the Government ordered in 1089 that the tax on Sreepandaravagai lands should be paid in kind. The people again complained and in 1095 the *kotta* measure was finally fixed to be equivalent to 8·65 *paras* of 800 cubic inches. Lastly, the Member said that the tax in kind paid to Suchindram and other Devaswoms in South Travancore was paid at the rate of 7·2 paras per *kotta* of paddy.

Thus, in the course of a century, the *kotta* measure was subjected to several variations and the decision of 1082 unmistakably proved that the declaration of the cubical capacity of a *kotta* as equivalent to 9·3625 *paras* was made on a wrong basis. Again, in the G. O. of 1082 fixing the *kotta* as equivalent to 8·65 *paras*, it was laid down that 8·65 *paras* of 800 cubic inches was the capacity of a *kotta* according to the smallest of the *marakkal* measures examined by the then Dewan Peishkar. The Member doubted whether the Peishkar did really examine all the measures found among the ryots and whether he verified the capacity of each and every one of such measures. Since the Government themselves had admitted in the above G. O. that there were "considerable variations in the capacity of the measures actually in use" the Member said that any decisions arrived at on the basis of one such measure could not be accurate and conclusive. In conclusion, he stated that the final decision of the Government fixing the *kotta* measure as equivalent to 8·65 *paras* in the Sirkar accounts was causing great hardship to the ryots. For instance, lands of the same settlement *tharam* situated in the Eraniel (now abolished) and Agastisvaram taluks were subjected to different assessments. That was due to the acceptance of the standard *kotta* of 8·65 *paras* in the Sirkar accounts and the commutation into money of the tax in kind as per that measure. To remedy the evils pointed out the Member prayed that the matter might be investigated once again and the standard *kotta* measure fixed at 7 $\frac{1}{7}$ *paras*.

Dewan's reply.—I am sorry I have to give you a disappointing reply. I am unable to appreciate your difficulties. The mattar was, as far as I can see, fully investigated by retired Peishkar Mr. N. Subrahmanya Aiyar. It is true that he did not find the *marakkal* a uniform measure all over Nanjanad. Each place had its own measure and each man said that his measure was the correct measure. Mr. Subrahmanya Aiyar got hold of all the measures and examined them and the method adopted by him seems to be correct. He found that the *kotta*, which was equivalent to 8 *paras* and 6$\frac{1}{2}$ *edangalies*, was the smallest *kotta* in actual use. Government thereupon ordered that that measure should be adopted. It was very much more favourable to the ryots than the *kotta* recognised in the Sirkar accounts as being equivalent to 9 *paras* and 3 $\frac{5}{8}$ *edangaies*. But you want that the *kotta* should now be made equal to 7 $\frac{1}{7}$ *paras*, because, at the time of the settlement, the land measurement of a *kotta* was fixed as equivalent to 7 $\frac{1}{7}$ *paras*. I cannot understand what the land measure has got to do with the grain measure. The whole question has been investigated very carefully and a final decision has been reached and I think it would be a wise thing to adhere to that decision. The Government have decided that the *kotta* should be taken as equivalent to 8 *paras* and 6$\frac{1}{2}$ *edangalies* and they do not see adequate reasons for re-opening that decision.

29. Need for a State Bank.

Mr. Ouseph Thoma (Member, Trading Classes, Changanachery) said that the irregularities on the part of some of the joint stock companies established in the

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